



Co-sponsor: Council Member Kitchen

Workforce First Program for People Experiencing Homelessness

SD23: Economic Opportunity & Affordability, Health & Environment

Workforce First Program

The [Workforce First](#) program is a successful program and is designed as a “win-win” prospect: people experiencing homelessness have regular employment, job training, access to support services, and assistance with finding housing. The city receives much-needed help with encampment cleanup in our parks and open spaces, plus assistance in our animal shelter.

Last year, Austin Public Health (APH) collaborated with Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD), Watershed Protection Department (WPD), and local non-profits [Family ElderCare](#) and [The Other Ones Foundation](#) (TOOF), on the Workforce First program to provide this part-time work opportunity to individuals experiencing homelessness to assist with encampment abatement in public parks and open spaces.

Workforce First Community Benefits

- For Fiscal Year 2021, TOOF would like to continue to grow the Workforce First program and apply more resources towards support services especially for housing assistance and eviction mitigation for the clients they have housed in the recent past.
- The program’s current operation includes a three rotating 5-person crews that performs primarily encampment cleanups and vegetative management throughout the city under the supervision of TOOF and Parks and Recreation staff.

Table 1. FY21 Funding Proposal

City Department	FY20 Funding	FY21 Funding	Total Funding Request
Parks and Recreation	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$82,020
Public Health	\$245,000	\$245,000	\$82,020
Watershed Protection	\$70,000	\$140,000	\$82,020
Austin Resource Recovery	\$300,000	\$125,000	\$82,020
Total Fund FY20	\$650,070	\$615,000 (FY21 proposed)	
FY21 Request			\$328,080

Source: Austin Public Health and The Other Ones Foundation



City of Austin

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Innovative Approach

The Other Ones Foundation offers an innovative, holistic approach.

- Employment opportunities are combined with highly individualized case management.
- Assistance is provided in obtaining vital records and filling out housing applications.
- TOOF also fills a crucial role as a social network provider where folks are welcome to clean up after the day's work at TOOF's headquarters and spend down time together as part of a supportive community.

Workforce First Services & Accomplishments

- Operated a day shelter for a full year that offered services such as shower facilities, laundry, day sleep, personal device charging and MHC and EAT programs to respond to COVID-19. Over 4,400 showers and 6,500 lunches were offered this year.
- Grew funding base to include foundations, recurring donation group, and more consistent community fundraising events.
- Hired six people experiencing homelessness as full-time staff.

Workforce First: Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Successes

- The current Workforce First operations include three rotating crews with seven individuals. Previously, the crews were only operating on the southern portion of Lady Bird Lake but last year's funding enabled an expansion of their services city-wide.
- This expansion allowed the Workforce First crews to assist with encampment abatements for two collaborating city departments – Parks and Recreation and Watershed Protection. The crews have performed consistent, rapid response times to trash accumulation.
- Encampment cleanups are just one of the several services the Workforce First crews can respond to, including home repair, pest treatment, and apartment cleaning for subsidized housing for over 70 units last year.
- The Other Ones Foundation, with the Workforce First program, continues to innovate in providing workforce solutions, case management services, and resources to successfully reintegrate folks back into permanent housing.
- The following are some successes over the last year:
 - **\$337,800** earned income paid to people experiencing homelessness
 - **380,625** lbs. of trashed moved out of green spaces in Austin
 - **62** clients moved into stable housing
 - **361** unduplicated clients served